



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

News Release

For Immediate Release

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“Choices for Independence” - May 2006 Declared Older Virginians Month

Richmond, Virginia - Americans are living longer and staying healthier than ever before, according to the Virginia Department for the Aging (VDA). "Older Virginians now have many more choices than long-term institutional care that once was the primary option for senior citizens," said Julie Christopher, new Commissioner of the Virginia Department for the Aging. "More and more, older Virginians are remaining in their homes and communities well into their later years. Keeping our seniors healthy, independent, and engaged benefits all generations," she said.

Virginia, and indeed the entire United States, is entering a new era. In 2007, 78 million baby boomers will begin turning age 60. This May, as we celebrate Older Virginians Month, VDA will continue to address this historic change in the population. The theme "Choices for Independence" was chosen to both celebrate the elderly as a national treasure, and to highlight the need for all Virginians to consider the impact that older persons living longer than previous generations will have throughout society. Older adults and baby boomers need to make thoughtful choices now so they will be more likely to remain healthy, productive, and financially secure in later life.

The Virginia Department for the Aging wants all Virginians to consider that better planning, a wider variety of community-based long-term care options and more consumer-friendly systems will help seniors remain vibrant and independent. "As Virginians, we value choice," said Commissioner Christopher. "Studies have shown that, given the choice, older adults will remain in their homes and communities for as long as possible. Virginia's network of aging service organizations is committed to helping them do that, by offering programs that help older persons to maintain good nutrition, stay active and remain engaged in their communities. Ultimately, these seniors will redefine "aging" in our society."

Commissioner Christopher concluded by saying, "It is never too early to begin gathering information and exploring the available options. We urge everyone to begin planning for their future now." For more information, either contact your local Area Agency on Aging (numbers can be found in local telephone directories), or contact the Virginia Department for the Aging toll-free at 1-800-552-3402 (nationwide voice/TTY). Those in the Greater Richmond area can call (804) 662-9333. Information is also available on the VDA web site at: <http://www.vda.virginia.gov>, including the Older Virginians Month Proclamation in the "News" section.

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CERTIFICATE of RECOGNITION

By virtue of the authority vested by the Constitution in the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, there is hereby officially recognized:

OLDER VIRGINIANS MONTH

WHEREAS, since 1963 the month of May has been designated by the U.S. Administration on Aging as America's special time to honor and recognize its older citizens; and

WHEREAS, there are currently more than 1 million Virginians over the age of sixty, and this population group is projected to expand to more than 2 million by 2025; and

WHEREAS, this year's theme for Older Virginians Month, "Choices For Independence", helps to remind the citizens of the Commonwealth about the importance of improving the quality of life for older Virginians; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's older citizens deserve to be treated with respect; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia GrandDriver initiative seeks to enable our older citizens to remain independent for as long as possible while keeping them informed and safe; and

WHEREAS, all of Virginia's citizens reap the benefits of living in an environment that promotes the well being of our older citizens;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Timothy M. Kaine, do hereby recognize May 2006 as **OLDER VIRGINIANS MONTH** in the **COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**, and I call this observance to the attention of all our citizens.




Governor


Secretary of the Commonwealth